

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

November 25, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Bhargava, Hamilton, Lee¹, Nieuwenhuis and Sumadiwirya

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Sumadiwirya led the flag salute.

(a) Small Business Saturday Proclamation

Councilmember Lee read the proclamation declaring November 29, 2025, as Small Business Saturday in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to support local shops, restaurants and small business owners on Saturday and throughout the year.

Manheme Mondragon, owner of Monseratte Columbia Cuisine, thanked the Council for the proclamation. He thanked the City for its assistance to small businesses and to individuals wanting to start a business.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

¹ Councilmember Lee participated remotely.

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days. Ms. Arredondo said individuals are allowed to speak for up to three minutes and only three speakers are allowed to speak to any particular side of a topic. In compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities, no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure or candidate for election.

- (a) Jasmine Donovan, President of Dick's Drive-In restaurants, thanked the City for its work to update the sign code. She said when they first explored their Bellevue location, they were told their iconic sign would be allowed. However, after they signed the lease, this interpretation changed. Ms. Donovan said clarity in the code is essential for everyone. She said their Crossroads location is not visible from either major road and many customers say they did not realize Dick's Drive-In was there. She said they are requesting a permanent, well-maintained landmark sign unlike the temporary signage that residents consistently say they do not like. She said allowing high-quality signage in commercial areas improves wayfinding, supports local businesses and aligns with the goals of the sign code update.
 - (b) Paul Rood said the Bellevue Sustainability Plan acknowledges that gas-powered leaf blowers and other lawn equipment contribute only one percent of greenhouse gas emissions. He said, however, that gas-powered equipment produces other emissions. He said a study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that gas lawn equipment represents nearly four percent of all VOC emissions and 12 percent of all carbon monoxide emissions. He noted his ongoing concern regarding the noise generated by gas-powered leaf blowers. He said the sustainability action plan does not address gas-powered lawn equipment, which is easy to prohibit and eliminate with legislation.
 - (c) Maria Hudson said she spoke recently with the FBI. She referenced the lawfare currently targeting perceived enemies of the presidential administration and said that similar lawfare is not addressed when directed at low-income people. She said she has experienced lawfare from the Bellevue Police Department's interlocal agency agreement with the Bellevue School District. She said the district has denied the existence of student sex trafficking and numerous police departments are ignoring it as well.
- 5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
 - 6. Report of the City Manager: None.
 - 7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.
 - 8. Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:
 - (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of October 28, 2025 Regular Meeting
Minutes of November 12, 2025 Regular Meeting
 - (b) Ordinance No. 6884 authorizing: 1) the execution of an agreement with Hughes Fire Equipment, Inc. to purchase two replacement fire ladder trucks for the Bellevue Fire Department, in an amount not to exceed \$5,077,861, plus all applicable taxes, and 2) amending the 2025-2026 adopted budget to increase appropriation to the Equipment Rental Fund by \$5,077,861.
 - (c) Ordinance No. 6885 amending Section 4.09.030 of the Bellevue City Code pursuant to a mandatory B&O Tax Model Ordinance update.
 - (d) Resolution No. 10556 to adopt the Mobility Implementation Plan 2025 Update, incorporating or superseding all prior City of Bellevue Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plans.
 - (e) Resolution No. 10557 adopting the 2026-2045 Transportation Facilities Plan.
 - (f) Resolution No. 10558 authorizing execution of a three-year interlocal agreement (ILA) with South Correctional Entity (SCORE) for inmate housing.
 - (g) Resolution No. 10559 authorizing execution of a five-year general services contract with Vital Mechanical Service, inc., for HVAC maintenance and repairs at all Parks & Community Services Department facilities in an amount not to exceed \$651,881, plus all applicable taxes.
 - (h) Resolution No. 10560 authorizing execution of an agreement with McKinstry Essention LLC for the Eastside Clean Buildings Technical Support Program in an amount not to exceed \$630,000, plus applicable taxes.
 - (i) Ordinance No. 6886 amending the Bellevue City Code (BCC) to change the plan horizon duration of the Transportation Facility Plan from 12 to 20 years; amending BCC sections 22.16.020 and 22.16.050; and establishing an effective date.
 - (j) Ordinance No. 6887 authorizing and providing for acquisition of interests in land for the purpose of constructing the Grand Connection: I-405 Crossing Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-216); providing for condemnation, appropriation, taking of land and property rights necessary therefore; providing for payment; directing the

initiation of appropriate proceedings in the manner provided by law for said condemnation; and establishing an effective date.

9. Public Hearings: None.

10. Study Session

(a) Updates to the Diversity Advantage Plan 2035 (DAP 2035)

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced staff's presentation of the Diversity Advantage Plan 2035 (DAP 2035). She said staff worked with the community over the past few years to update the plan. She said the Council vision reflects a commitment to ensuring Bellevue is a welcoming place for everyone. Ms. Carlson said DAP 2035 includes specific objectives, which will be implemented through actions of multiple City departments.

Ms. Carlson said members of the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team were in attendance and would participate in the presentation. She noted that Deputy City Manager Joe Todd has been the key liaison for the committee over the past year.

Dr. Linda Whitehead, the City's former Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer, said DAP 2035 is an effort to ensure that every voice is heard within the City organization and throughout the community.

Sara Boyle, DEI Community Outreach and Engagement Administrator, said the City's first cultural diversity plan was established in 1993 and the first Diversity Advantage Plan was adopted in 2014. In 2024, diversity, equity and inclusion was added as the City's sixth core value. The plan review and update was launched a few years ago to: 1) ensure the City's strategies and priorities reflect current community needs, 2) continue integrating diversity, equity and inclusion into services and operations, and 3) respond to evolving community demographics and disparities. In 2023, 62 percent of Bellevue's population were under age 44, 45 percent were foreign-born, 60 percent identified as a race other than white, and 60 percent reported speaking a language other than English at home. The percentage of households earning less than \$50,000 per year decreased from 26 percent in 2012 to 18 percent in 2023. The percentage of households earning more than \$150,000 per year increased from 23 percent in 2012 to 54 percent in 2023.

Ms. Boyle reported that 32 percent of Bellevue households are considered cost-burdened and approximately 50 percent of Black and Latino households are considered cost-burdened. Latino, Black and multiracial households are 3-4 times more likely to experience poverty than white and Asian households. Black and Latino households are about half as likely to own a home compared to white households.

Ms. Boyle summarized the DAP update process. Phase 1, community and staff engagement, included hosting 12 community dialogues and numerous staff focus groups across all departments. Phase 2 used the public engagement data to draft equity objectives and validated those with City departments for accuracy and feasibility. Phase 3 involved preparing for

implementation of the plan by gathering input from the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team and through a community open house to introduce the public to DAP 2035.

Ms. Boyle said DAP 2035 is a 10-year enterprise-wide plan aligned to the Council's Strategic Target Areas (STAs) and is a roadmap for the priorities related to building a more inclusive community. DAP 2035 continues to respond to community diversity while centering equity. It is designed to be more adaptive and agile than the previous plan in responding to community needs and it builds in accountability through performance metrics and reporting. The plan includes 41 long-term equity objectives and will help to respond to community needs, prioritize and operationalize strategies, and connect DEI work to other strategic work (e.g., Comprehensive Plan, Affordable Housing Plan, human services planning and grant allocations).

The next steps for the implementation of DAP 2035 include: 1) develop near-term work plans for each department, 2) identify key equity indicators to measure progress, and 3) create an online DAP 2035 data dashboard.

Regina Glenn, Chair, Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team, noted that three of the current eight members have been on the committee for the past three years and participated in the community dialogue process. That community input was incorporated into the updated DAP 2035. Ms. Glenn said members of the committee met with all department heads to learn about their plans related to DAP 2035 and to provide input.

Dr. Elba Moise, Vice Chair, presented operational recommendations from the committee related to DAP 2035: 1) develop a transparent system for tracking progress on DAP 2035 goals and actions, and share the information periodically with the community, 2) invest in centers and programs that serve as centralized and trusted resource hubs for immigrant and refugee communities, 3) expand culturally and linguistically responsive mental and behavioral health services, 4) support women and minority-owned businesses through policies that improve access to city contracts and help create innovative opportunities for small businesses, and 5) create policies for guiding the implementation of AI technologies that evaluate possible risks related to equity, privacy and/or safety.

Dr. Whitehead thanked City staff for their contributions in shaping DAP 2035. She thanked the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team for their work and the general public for their comments, suggestions and feedback. She requested Council direction to staff to prepare DAP 2035 for Council consideration and adoption at a future meeting.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for their work. He expressed appreciation for the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team and for their significant and meaningful engagement with the community. He expressed support for the DAP 2035 update and commended the breadth of the goals to meet community needs. He praised the robust community engagement process and the high level of resident participation. He said DAP 2035 aligns with the community input and the Council's priorities. He expressed support for the plan to establish key equity indicators to measure outcomes.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Chair Glenn noted that residents consistently indicated they want their voices to be heard. Ms. Glenn said residents will appreciate the Council's support of the plan and the direction to staff to integrate it into their routine operations. Dr. Moise said success will be evaluated, in part, through feedback from service providers. She noted the importance of community engagement on an ongoing basis.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Boyle said DAP 2035 incorporates input from the community dialogues. Ms. Robinson said she liked the focus on business support. However, she suggested listing non-profit organizations as eligible for support as well. Ms. Robinson said the community dialogue input and other documents are consistent with what she often hears from residents, businesses and community organizations. She thanked staff and the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team for their work.

Mayor Robinson said Crossroads shopping center is valued by the community, especially among diverse populations, as an important public gathering space. She expressed concern that it will be redeveloped and suggested that the City articulate what it values about the mall and how to maintain those benefits. She said perhaps it would be a good area for the cross-cultural center. Ms. Robinson suggested adding the following language to the plan: "Strengthen equitable access to human services in ways that meet the diverse and evolving needs of Bellevue communities and are shaped by approaches to address the cultural, linguistic and lived experiences of those receiving services." She suggested this would provide guidance for human services providers.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff and the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team for their work and community involvement. He commented on the significant demographic changes in Bellevue over the past few decades. He acknowledged the importance of Crossroads shopping center in creating a sense of community. He expressed support for DAP 2035.

Mr. Lee said it is important for cultural groups to learn from each other. He commented on his longtime interest in developing a cross-cultural center.

Ms. Boyle said staff has been implementing direction received from the Council in 2023 regarding the cross-cultural center feasibility study. She said the Council initiated the creation of the cross-cultural programming grants in 2024. She said the program will continue into 2026. She said there is funding for a feasibility assessment and siting analysis for the cross-cultural center project.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked Dr. Whitehead, staff, the committee and everyone else who participated in the development of DAP 2035. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Boyle said staff recently presented information regarding contracting and procurement to the Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team. Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed support for the committee's recommendation regarding assistance to women and minority owned businesses.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Boyle provided clarification and additional information regarding cost-burdened households and community courts.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryra thanked Chair Glenn, Vice Chair Moise and staff for their work and the presentation. She thanked the committee for their extensive work throughout the community dialogue process. Ms. Sumadiwiryra, a small business owner, expressed support for the recommendations regarding women and minority owned businesses.

Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryra, Chair Glenn commented regarding the public input received by the committee. Ms. Sumadiwiryra said there can be cultural differences that affect whether and how a person might become involved or provide input. Ms. Boyle concurred that staff encountered individuals with varying comfort levels in interacting with government. She said the community dialogues were held throughout the community at schools, community centers, Crossroads shopping center and other locations familiar to residents. She said the City partners with trusted community organizations to reach out to diverse populations.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryra said she appreciated that DAP 2035 applies to the whole City organization and its operations. Ms. Boyle commented briefly regarding the process with each department to gather input for the creation of DAP 2035.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked everyone for their work on the plan. He expressed support for the focus on equity and on data, metrics and accountability. He expressed support for DAP 2035 and highlighted key themes. He encouraged the ongoing evaluation of new policies.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked Chair Glenn, Dr. Moise and staff for the presentation. He said DAP 2035 is a guide for Bellevue's future and ensures that we continue to welcome the world. He thanked the committee for the extensive public engagement process that was favorably embraced by the community. He commented on the importance of performance metrics. He expressed support for the five operational recommendations provided by the committee. He said he looks forward to taking action to adopt the plan at a future meeting.

At 7:37 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:50 p.m.

- (b) Bellevue City Code Amendment to update the Sign Code consistent with legal requirements and contemporary sign design techniques.

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's overview of the sign code update process and overall direction of the code amendments.

Nick Whipple, Code and Policy Director, Development Services Department, recalled that the sign code update was initiated by the Council on August 6, 2024.

Robbie Sepler, Assistant City Attorney, said a U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled that local sign codes generally cannot regulate based on the content of the signs, and jurisdictions must regulate all signs of the same type in the same manner. Signs may be regulated for form, location, timing, lighting and safety.

Charlie Engel, Associate Planner, said the Council expressed a desire for simplicity and flexibility in the code, consistency across the code, and a diverse public outreach approach to

update the code. The goals of the code update are to: 1) balance business needs and aesthetic desires, 2) encourage contemporary design and technology, 3) simplify and streamline regulations, and 4) align with key court decisions.

Ms. Engel said Phase 1 of the public engagement process was initiated in August 2024 to expand awareness of the project, share project objectives and proposed approaches, and to gather perspectives on project priorities. Phase 2 extends into 2026 and involves sharing the key themes and priorities identified in Phase 1 and soliciting feedback on the recommended code changes. Phase 3 will continue to expand awareness of the new code with a focus on community education and public information sessions. Adoption of the sign code update is anticipated during the first quarter of 2026. Phase 1 communications included an online presence, sign code questionnaire, listening sessions, City newsletter updates, internal subject matter experts and direct engagement and input from residents.

Key themes and priorities identified throughout public outreach relate to sign aesthetics and preferences, temporary signs and enforcement, and streamlining and increasing flexibility in the code. Ms. Engel said residents expressed concern regarding temporary signs and inadequate signage. She noted that 54 percent of the survey participants indicated that they live in Bellevue, 24 percent indicated they work in Bellevue, 12 percent indicated they own or operate a business in Bellevue and 10 percent said they come to Bellevue for restaurants, shopping and/or school.

Ms. Engel said that 41 percent of the survey respondents indicated they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the sign code. Concerns identified included too many signs (especially temporary signage), signs that are too large or distracting, inadequate signage and signs that are too small. Some residents encouraged allowing signs to be more artistic. Others suggested reducing visual clutter, maintaining current community aesthetics, reducing the allowance for electronic and digital signs, supporting businesses by expanding sign visibility and encouraging the construction of durable signs with high-quality materials. Temporary signage includes political campaign signs, real estate signs, construction signage, A-frame/sidewalk signs and event signage. Ms. Engel noted that 94 percent of the survey respondents agreed with requiring the removal of temporary signs that are damaged, faded or in disrepair.

Ms. Engel shared community input regarding streamlining regulations and enhancing flexibility in the code. Residents indicated that the sign code is too complicated and restrictive. Ms. Engel commented on the challenge of finding the right balance between competing interests including aesthetics, regulatory, safety and flexibility.

Ms. Engel said the sign code update is a full rewrite of the code to improve clarity, usability and consistency. The scope of the code update includes: 1) consolidate sign standards across districts, 2) maintain overall signage allowances for properties, 3) ensure that the size, scale and visibility of sign lettering remain consistent with current standards, and 4) update the rules for temporary signs on private property and in public rights-of-way. Ms. Engel said the sign code update for commercial and mixed-use districts includes addressing consistent standards for commercial districts, area-specific standards for Old Bellevue and other areas, continued allowances for high-rise signs for corporate headquarters and major tenants, limited freestanding digital/interactive

kiosks along key corridors (e.g., Grand Connection), and establishing a pathway for Master Sign Plans across large and/or multi-building sites.

Ms. Engel said that for residential districts, the sign code update will address using consistent standards for residential districts and continuing to limit permanent signage. Issues to explore related to temporary signage include: 1) uniform framework, 2) district-specific size and duration limits, 3) portable sign allowances and limits (e.g., A-boards), 4) permitting requirements and exceptions, and 5) timeframes and removal requirements.

Ms. Engel noted the project website at BellevueWA.gov/sign-code-update.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for the robust community engagement process to help guide the sign code update. He expressed support for moving forward.

Councilmember Bhargava suggested allowing signage flexibility for specific districts. He expressed support for streamlining and simplifying the permit process. Responding to Mr. Bhargava, Mr. Whipple said the sign code update process will review enforcement practices.

Councilmember Sumadiwiry commented on the importance of the sign code update. She encouraged fairness and clarity in drafting and applying the code. She noted she has heard comments from the community about too many temporary signs in certain areas. She commented on the importance for small businesses to be able to have a clear, visible and attractive sign. Ms. Sumadiwiry thanked staff for the extensive community outreach.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said that he wants to give every business the opportunity to be successful. However, he hears complaints from the community that there are too many signs in certain areas or during certain times (e.g., tax season, elections). He asked who will determine whether a sign is unattractive or in disrepair. He expressed concern regarding effective enforcement.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed support for simplifying and clarifying the code and permitting process. He said businesses often make important decisions based on what they can do with signage. He said Dick's Drive-In signed a lease based on their understanding regarding signage. However, their desired sign has not been allowed. He suggested that the City follow the direction given to Dick's Drive-In before they signed their lease.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Whipple said the sign code update will explore the regulation of iconic signage. Mr. Whipple said staff is exploring a way to allow the iconic Dick's Drive-In sign through a location-specific approval process.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Whipple said the City cannot regulate sign content. Mr. Lee recalled that a number of Factoria businesses changed their signs when the area was annexed by the City. He expressed concern regarding an old billboard, however. Mr. Whipple confirmed

that the current sign code does not allow billboards and noted that the update anticipates continuing that prohibition.

Mr. Sepler said free speech must be respected. However, there are certain exceptions for regulating signage based on guidelines for obscenities. He said he would research the history of the billboard.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for their work and noted that his questions have already been raised by his colleagues.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis encouraged expedited processing of sign permits.

Mayor Robinson asked whether the sign code update is anticipated to meet the needs related to the sign for Dick's Drive-In. Mr. Whipple said staff believes they can define a pathway to permit the sign. Ms. Robinson said she likes the retro billboard in the Factoria area. She encouraged consistent enforcement of the sign code.

11. Land Use Reports: None.
12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.
13. Written Reports: None.
14. Unfinished Business: None.
15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.
17. Adjournment

At 8:39 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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